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## Benefits of Fun with Food Camp on Undergraduate Nutrition Students' Education

Cecily Bernice Young

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Benefits of Fun with Food Camp on undergraduate nutrition students' education

By

Cecily Young

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of  
Mississippi State University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Science  
in Nutrition  
in the Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion

Mississippi State, Mississippi

August 2017

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Cecily Young

2017

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Undergraduate programs in nutrition and dietetics do not require experiential learning as part of their curriculum. This study examines the benefits of working as a camp counselor at a weeklong kids' cooking camp on undergraduate nutrition students. Observations and surveys were used to determine the effects of the camp as an experiential learning scenario on nine undergraduate nutrition students at Mississippi State University. The study found that the experience provided academic benefits through reinforcing classroom knowledge, professional benefits through career discernment, and personal benefits through the development of soft skills such as problem solving and time management. The study can be used as evidence in favor of adding more hands-on learning experiences to undergraduate nutrition education.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

For undergraduate students in college and university settings, the quality of their education is crucial in determining their success once they have entered the workforce. The bulk of a major's curriculum is typically classroom based learning, but hands on learning is also important to practice and develop skills that cannot be learned from a book or a lecture. Majors that prepare students for careers that require lots of human interaction, such as nursing or teaching, have time for hands on learning built in to their curriculum, in the form of clinicals or student teaching.

#### **Standards for undergraduate nutrition curriculum**

In the field of nutrition, the undergraduate curriculum is primarily classroom based learning. According to standard 8 of the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND<sup>®</sup>), experiential learning is not a requirement for didactic programs in dietetics and nutrition (DPD), or the undergraduate degree required to become a registered dietitian. Standard 5 states that the core of DPDs is knowledge based, not experience based [1]. Students often have to wait until they enter a dietetic internship, post-graduation, before they get the practical, hands on experience they need to develop the skills to become a registered dietitian. If DPDs do have experiential learning built into their curriculum, often students are required to find volunteer and work opportunities on their own, apart from the sponsoring institution.

Completion of a dietetic internship is required in order for a student to become a registered dietitian after completing their DPD. While this provides practical application of the knowledge portion of the DPD, experiential learning completed during the DPD develops skills in students that are beneficial to have when entering the internship. As dietetic internships become more competitive, hands on experience during undergraduate is often a deciding factor on who is accepted. Nutrition is a field that works closely with patients and clients, similar to nursing or teaching. The curriculum for DPDs should reflect the importance of gaining as much hands on experience as possible, from the early stages of the learning process, before entering the workforce.

### **Fun with Food Camp**

Undergraduate students at Mississippi State University have the opportunity to put their knowledge to use by serving as counselors at Fun with Food camp. This is a weeklong summer camp offered through the university. The camp provides an experiential learning environment for children entering third to sixth grade. Campers participate in activities including food preparation and field trips to farms and a grocery store in order to apply math, language, social studies, and time management skills. The outcomes for campers are clearly outlined as the following: to become acquainted with food and food production, to be exposed to new foods and flavors, to utilize math skills through measuring, to utilize reading skills to follow recipes, to utilize time management and planning skills in meal preparation, to understand importance of food safety, and to participate in games to promote learning and physical activity. These objectives help shape the curriculum and ensure that campers have an experience that is both fun and

informative. The benefits of Fun with Food camp can be assessed by whether or not the camper outcomes are achieved.

The students who work as counselors are responsible for leading groups of campers through their daily activities and helping them as they learn new food preparation skills. These counselors are there for all of the experiences with the campers and receive different but equally positive benefits from participating in Fun with Food camp. These benefits, however, are harder to consolidate into a list of outcomes. One of the reasons for this is that there has been little to no formal follow up with past counselors to analyze their experience at camp.

However, through informal conversations with undergraduate students several semesters or years after their time as a camp counselor, it has been expressed that the experience has numerous positive effects on their dietetic internships, and careers as Registered Dietitians. Students felt that they improved their leadership, time management, and organizational skills. They also expressed a perceived increase in self-efficacy and belief that they could succeed as either a graduate student or dietetic intern. This is consistent with the literature concerning the benefits of camp counseling and experiential learning.

### **Purpose**

Therefore, the purpose of this research project is to evaluate the effects of working in the position of counselor at Fun with Food camp. This will be achieved through observation of counselors during their time at camp as well as follow-up interviews with counselors concerning their experiences. Showing that this experience is beneficial to the students will stress the importance of using hands-on learning in the field

of undergraduate nutrition education. Hopefully DPD programs will begin to incorporate more experiential learning into their curriculum so that students are as prepared as possible for their dietetic internships and future careers as registered dietitians.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### **Experiential Learning Theory**

There are numerous benefits of experiential learning situations for students. Experiential learning gives students the opportunity to apply their knowledge in hands-on situations as they move from theoretical understanding to real life situations [2]. According to the experiential learning theory [3], concrete experience is a key part of learning and creating knowledge and so the students experience learning in a way that they are not regularly exposed to on a day-to-day basis. If this theory were applied to the curriculum of nutrition students, they would regularly have the opportunities to test their classroom knowledge in real world scenarios, and come back with new knowledge based on their experiences.

#### **Experiential learning model**

The experiential learning theory can be visualized through a model that illustrates the cycle in which learning takes place through transforming experience into knowledge (figure 2.1). In the cycle, there are two modes of grasping experience, concrete experience and abstract conceptualization. There are also two modes of transforming experience, reflective observation and active experimentation [4].

Concrete experience can describe to any situation that a person encounters can be a concrete experience. This may be a new experience that the person finds themselves in

for the first time. A new concrete experience can also be created when an existing situation is reinterpreted through observation and conceptualization. For a university nutrition student, an example of concrete experience may be an after-school program for children where the university student volunteers to teach healthy eating.

Reflective observation occurs when a person either intentionally or subconsciously reflects on the new experience that they are or were in. This includes observing what is happening during the experience and reflecting on those observations. Reflecting may take place during or after an experience. For example, during the after-school program, the nutrition student may notice how the children lose interest quickly when given too much new nutrition information.

Abstract conceptualization begins with analysis of the observations of the experience. The analysis leads to the formation of new concepts and ideas or the modification of an existing concept of the experience. Abstract conceptualization allows a person to reach conclusions about an experience, such as something they may do differently, or the verification of something they are already doing. For example, in the after-school program, the nutrition student can think back to knowledge about child nutrition education that they learned in the classroom. They may remember a strategy to use a game or story to teach nutrition to children, and make a plan to play a game at the next session.

Active experimentation occurs when a person applies their new ideas and concepts to a situation. Conclusions that were reached after analyzing an experience are tested out in a new experience. At this point, the cycle begins again as this test creates a new concrete experience. For example, the nutrition student goes back to the after-school



program the next week and executes their plan of playing a nutrition-related game. Their observations and reflections about the game starts the cycle over again [3].

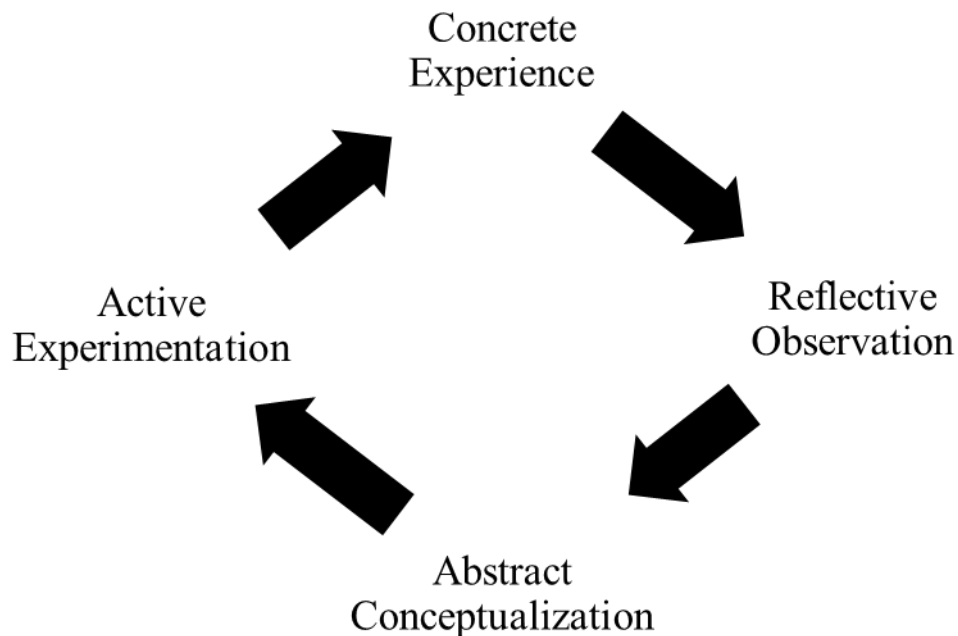


Figure 2.1 Experiential learning model

### **Experiential learning and college students**

Studies focusing on students who participate in experiential learning scenarios show the importance of hands-on learning. Students who participate in these types of programs are more likely to engage in similar activities and exhibit similar behaviors as was experienced during the program [5]. Other benefits of experiential learning are accountability, peer support, and organizational skills [6, 7]. Research shows one of the main benefits is the increase of perception of self-efficacy. Students are more likely to find that as they work, they are in some part in charge of what they learn and take away

from the experience [6]. Self-efficacy results as students make decisions for themselves while not under direct supervision [7].

These studies largely focus on disciplines that involve direct contact with patients or clients, including nursing and social work. These help their students experience the reality of their field before they enter the work force. Development of these skills benefits undergraduate students and lessens the learning curve as they graduate school and a workplace where they do not have instructors giving them direction all the time. There is a gap in the literature when it comes to undergraduate nutrition programs using experiential learning. Nutrition is similar to fields like nursing or social work in the sense that there is a lot of patient/client interaction. More research needs to be done to validate the importance of experiential learning in the field of nutrition.

### **Benefits of a camp counselor experience**

The nature of Fun with Food Camp lends itself to be a beneficial experiential learning scenario for nutrition students based on the literature surrounding camp counselor experiences. There are many studies that examine the link between working as a camp counselor and an increase in beneficial life skills. Many of these studies focus on groups such as 4-H, which provides camp experiences as part of their youth mentoring programs. One of the most common themes found in camp counselors who were surveyed was an increase in leadership skills [8-10]. Another was the enhancement of initiative, which is part of the development of self-efficacy [11, 12]. Development of skills in problem solving was another benefit found from the camp counselor experience [9, 13]. The possible development of these skills, combined with an opportunity to use

nutrition knowledge, makes Fun with Food Camp an ideal setting to observe nutrition students working in an experiential learning scenario.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### **Research Design**

This research project was designed to answer two research questions:

1. (a) How well does the undergraduate counselor position at Fun with Food camp align with the experiential learning theory?  
  
(b) What are the professional, personal, and academic effects of working as a Fun with Food camp counselor on undergraduate nutrition students at Mississippi State University?
2. What are the specific roles and responsibilities of camp counselors in the Fun with Food Camp program?

The first set of research question assumes that Fun with Food camp is a practical learning experience for undergraduate students in which they will be able to put into action knowledge they have learned in the classroom. 1(a) evaluates whether or not the Fun with Food camp counselor experience fits into the Experiential Learning Theory model. Answering this question will provide insight into how effective the setup of the camp is for allowing students to utilize their knowledge and gain new skills.

1(b) asks what the effects of this experience will be, which is an attempt to not restrict or influence what effects are looked for during the week of camp. That part of the

question was kept more general rather than asking how the experience would affect one particular area, such as professional development.

The practical significance of answering this question will be to determine whether or not Fun with Food camp is a beneficial experiential learning opportunity for students. It will also inform the educational process for the nutrition undergraduate program at Mississippi State University. Understanding the benefits of this program will help to shape future curriculum for DPD classes. The question is quite narrow in that it focuses on a small group of students specifically at Mississippi State University. Pragmatically, this will make answering the research question easier even though it decreases the external validity. However, there is the possibility that the results from answering this research question can be applied to other experiential learning cases in other undergraduate programs.

The second research question is a program evaluation question. It is significant in that it will help to define the role of counselors at Fun with Food camp. Traditionally counselors have been trained by the camp director, but there is not a written training manual or description of the specific duties of the counselors. Since the researcher was already observing the week of camp, they will easily be able to document the day-to-day activities and responsibilities of the counselors. This information will be used in the development of a Train the Trainer manual for camp. This will practically benefit anyone who attempts to recreate Fun with Food camp.

### **Camp Description**

Fun with Food Camp occurs over a five day period and runs from 8am until 5pm every day. There are several levels of leadership over the counselors. The camp is

directed by a faculty member of the university who is also a registered dietitian.

Alongside the director is a chef who does a cooking demonstration for the campers every day and helps them with their knife handling and food preparation skills. One undergraduate student assists the director as the camp coordinator. The coordinator is in charge of planning camp during the Spring semester and managing the week of camp. The counselors are split into four groups of two or three and oversee a group of campers, who are divided based on age.

Each day of camp has a similar structure. The campers come in and sit with their groups to do writing, math, or other activities. The camp director gives a nutrition lesson to the entire group based on the theme for the day (carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vegetables, and fruits). The chef then does his demonstration and the campers break back into their groups to begin preparing lunch. After lunch, the campers leave and go on a field trip, including a trip to a tomato farm, dairy farm, and supermarket. After they return from the field trip, the campers either do another cooking activity or an outside game.

### **Participants**

The participants for my research study were junior and senior undergraduate nutrition students at Mississippi State University who were volunteered to work as counselors for Fun with Food Camp. There were nine undergraduate nutrition students chosen to work as counselors. Two additional counselors, a high school student and an extension agent, did not fit the category of undergraduate nutrition student and were not included as part of the study. Each camp counselor led one of four groups of campers with one or two co-counselors.

## **Data Collection**

Data was collected through two methods, direct observations and a post-camp survey. The first part of the study involved observations made during the week of camp by the researcher. The camp ran began Monday and ended Friday, but counselors attended a day long training on the Friday prior to the beginning of camp. For the observations, the researcher followed the same schedule as the counselors, although they did not take part in their same duties and responsibilities. They chose to be a non-participant observer in order to have the flexibility to move around and observe all of the counselors throughout the day. The researcher took on the role of a “floater” and moved between groups, sometimes helping with small tasks, sometimes talking to counselors and campers, and sometimes simply watching the various activities. They took notes and recorded them in a notebook. For each counselor, interactions were noted between them and the campers, other counselors, and authority figures such as the camp director and chef.

The second part of the study involved an online survey that was administered after the conclusion of camp. The survey was conducted through Qualtrics, an electronic survey software. The link to the survey was emailed to the counselors the day after the last day of camp. The counselors were given a week to complete the survey. The deadline for completion was then extended an additional week, in order to increase response. The survey included eight questions:

1. Reflecting on Food Camp, what stands out as the most memorable experience?
2. What do you feel you learned about yourself during your time as a counselor?
3. What expectations did you have coming into the week of camp that were met?

4. What expectations did you have about working as a counselor that were not met?
5. How did your camp experience reinforce knowledge learned in your nutrition classes?
6. How might you use what you learned this week in a professional setting in the future?
7. How might your experiences affect your career goals related to nutrition and dietetics?
8. If you have any additional information you would like to provide about your experience as a Fun with Food Camp counselor, please include it here.

### **Data Analysis**

Open coding was used in order to analyze the responses from the surveys [14]. The first step of open coding was to label different phenomenon as a concept. Certain phrases, sentences, or entire answers to the questions could be given a name that described the concept of it, in order to categorize it better. Once the responses were labeled as concepts, the concepts were grouped into categories. The categories were used to classify concepts and group them with other concepts that pertained to a similar phenomenon or idea.

A similar process was used in order to analyze my observations from the week of camp. Tasks were labeled that the counselors did on a daily basis. These observations were then compared to the schedule that was written for each day of camp. Some of the tasks that observed were explicitly written on the schedule, while others were not. Other tasks seemed integral to the success of the day, but were not explicitly written on the



schedule. Similar tasks that were done each day were grouped into categories to describe the main roles and responsibilities of the counselors throughout the week.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### **Participant Characteristics**

The participants of this study included 9 undergraduate nutrition students from Mississippi State University. There were 8 females and 1 male. All 9 counselors were entering their senior year at Mississippi State. All 9 counselors were over the age of 19.

#### **Experiential Learning Cycle**

The notes written during observations during Fun with Food camp showed that that the structure of Fun With Food camp fits into the Experiential Learning Theory model. Not only does the week as a whole lend itself to this theory, but each individual day serves as its own “experience” that influences the days following. Through this cycle, counselors were able to apply knowledge learned in the classroom setting to a real life situation.

#### **Concrete Experience**

Day one of camp served as the first segment of concrete experience for the counselors. They had received training the week before and had their knowledge from academic courses. The first day was chaotic as the counselors were forced to adjust their expectations and plans with the realities of working with groups of active, excited

children. Each camp day is fast-paced, and on the first day the counselors seemed to go into default mode in order to last until the end of the day without any major incidents.

### **Reflective Observation**

Built into the end of each day, after the campers had left, was time for the counselors to gather together and debrief the day. The camp director led the group in sharing their observations from the day. After the first day, the counselors reflected on what went well and what could have done better. Removed from the action of camp, the counselors were able to look at the day as a whole and evaluate what had happened.

### **Abstract Conceptualization**

After reflecting on the events of the first day, the counselors discussed what could be done differently to make the next day go more smoothly. They thought of solutions to problems that had arisen and made plans for how to be more efficient and better prepared. An example of a problem that was noted after the first day was that they had run out of time to do some of the activities that were on the schedule. The counselors recognized that they could do a better job delegating tasks to the junior counselors and campers, instead of trying to do everything themselves, especially when it came to preparing the meal for lunch. They also made plans to better utilize their down time to prep for upcoming activities instead of standing around waiting to be told what to do.

### **Active Experimentation**

The second day gave the counselors the opportunity to execute the plans they had made the night before. On the second day of camp, they knew what to expect and so were not quite as overwhelmed. They did a better job anticipating problems before they

occurred, and finding quick solutions to problems that did arise. The counselors did a better job delegating tasks during the preparation for lunch since that had decided they would beforehand. As well as being able to act on the new ideas that had risen from the first day of camp, the second day of camp also served as a new day for concrete experience. And so the cycle began again.

Each day of camp was structured like this, and so each day the counselors were able to act based on their observations and reflections of the previous days. As a whole, the week of camp provided concrete experience that the counselors will be able to reflect on, and create new ideas for actions that apply to future activities.

### **Benefits of Counselor Experience**

The responses to the post-camp surveys showed that working as a counselor reinforced knowledge learned during class time as well as developed “soft” skills that cannot necessarily be learned from a textbook.

#### **Professional Benefits**

According to the responses to the post-camp survey, the counselors found that having hands on experience in these areas helped offer clarity in the area of professional development. For example, question seven asked, “how might your experiences affect your career goals related to nutrition and dietetics?” To some it helped discern whether or not they want to work with children in the future, such as the counselor who stated, “I feel like Fun with Food Camp made me realize that my personality is not best suited for working with children.” For others who had only considered the field of clinical nutrition, the experience opened up a door into the possibility of community nutrition, such as the

counselor who said, “I have always been very geared towards clinical nutrition, but this allowed me to become more interested in community nutrition.”

### **Personal Benefits**

The answers to the post-camp survey also showed evidence that the campers gained skills during their experience that cannot be gained through classroom learning. These “soft” skills are important qualities that internship directors, graduate school admissions, and future employers look for as well as evidence of “book” knowledge. The main skills mentioned by counselors fell into two categories: problem solving and time management.

**Problem Solving:** Throughout the week of camp, the counselors were faced with many situations in which things did not go as planned. Three of the most common concepts that the counselors felt they learned are tools that help to solve problems. One concept was learning how to handle stressful situations and managing to stay calm even when things were not going as planned. For example, one counselor said, “I learned that no matter how urgent situations may seem, I need to be able to step back and take time to think objectively while staying collected.” Another concept was the ability to think quickly on their feet. The third concept was an increase in confidence in making decisions in the kitchen.

**Time Management:** Time management was also key to the success of Fun with Food camp. Counselors reported increasing in three main skills that are essential for good time management. One was an increase in organizational skills. The second skill was the ability to understand the importance of delegation and learning how to better divide tasks. One counselor felt that they learned “That I could delegate tasks to other members of my

group in a nice and effective manner without coming on too strong.” The third skill was the ability to think ahead and prepare for a task before it started.

### **Academic Benefits**

The post-camp survey also revealed that the counselors were able to strengthen their classroom knowledge. Question five asked “how did your camp experience reinforce knowledge learned in your nutrition classes?” Three counselors noted that they utilized skills learned during Science of Food Preparation, which teaches basic food handling and preparation skills. Science of Food Preparation was also mentioned in other survey answers in the context providing knowledge that was used during camp. Two counselors said they used knowledge learned in Community Nutrition, which teaches nutrition from a non-clinical perspective. Other classes that were mentioned in the answers to question five were Quantity Food Service and Nutrition through the Lifecycle.

### **Roles and responsibilities of counselors**

Through the observations during the week of camp, it was noted of the things the counselors did that were integral to each day going smoothly and according to plan. The tasks and responsibilities were grouped into two categories; tasks that involved the campers and tasks that did not. Both were equally important for ensuring that the campers had a safe and fun environment to learn in each day.

## Responsibilities not directly involving the campers

Table 4.1 Responsibilities directly involving the campers

Activities in between “structured” events	During down time, the counselors must be able to engage the campers to ensure that they do not get bored or out of control. This includes leading them in drawing or writing in their journals, playing indoor/table games, letting campers practice their knife skills by chopping extra vegetables, etc.
Food preparation	The main event of each day is the preparation of lunch. The counselor’s leadership is crucial in ensuring that the campers have a safe and enjoyable experience while cooking. The counselor must be able to organize the campers so that everyone is busy with a task that fits their skill level. The counselor needs to find a balance of delegating tasks and letting the campers have hands on experience while still ensuring that things run smoothly and the food is prepared on time. Some tasks, such as cutting and chopping, requires direct supervision, while other tasks such as measuring and mixing can be done with less direct help from the counselor.
Field trips	The counselors are in charge of managing campers during field trips. This includes getting them on and off the buses in a timely fashion, keeping them quiet and organized while at the site, and encouraging participation and engagement when appropriate.
Outside games	Counselors are expected to lead and participate in any games or activities that occur outside of the kitchen. This could include field games, making butter, planting herbs, etc. Enthusiasm from the counselors and encouraging participation is key.
Crowd control	There are times during the camp day where the campers are all gathered together to either watch a cooking demonstration or listen to a lesson. The counselors should be dispersed throughout and around the campers, helping them stay attentive and focused.

## Responsibilities not directly involving the campers

Table 4.2 Responsibilities not directly involving the campers

Preparation before and after campers go home	There is a large amount of planning that goes into making sure each day of camp goes smoothly. At the end of each day counselors review the agenda and recipes for the next day with all of the equipment and food needed for the day. Schedules are made for assignments of tasks for campers, individually and as a group. The counselors also set up curriculum materials for each activity throughout the day. Everything needs to be put back in its place at the end of the day to ensure a smooth start the next morning. Time needs to be taken to review the day and brainstorm ways to make improvements for the next day.
Lesson plans	Each counselor was responsible for teaching one lesson during the week to all of the campers. Each counselor chose a country or culture and made a presentation about that particular type of food and the spices and herbs used. The lesson needs to be interesting, age-appropriate, and informative. This lesson is assigned during the training session and the plan is done outside of camp on the counselor's own time.
Assisting presentors	Daily during camp a chef and dietitian do food demonstrations and nutrition lessons, respectively, with the campers. It is important that the counselors are available to help with any preparation before or during these presentations. This could include working as sous-chef or simply being on hand to grab an extra pot or pan.
Snack preparation	Snacks are served during "class" time when all of the campers are gathered together for presentations. Counselors need to coordinate to prepare the snack for the day to make sure it is ready to serve on time. On some days the counselors are in charge of making the snack and on other days they are plating whatever was made during the cooking demonstration for a tasting with the campers. Counselors should be available to pass out snacks without disturbing the lesson and clean up trash in an efficient manner.
Manage junior counselors	Each group has one junior counselor who has been a camper before but is not old enough to be a counselor. It is the responsibility of the counselors to ensure the junior counselors are assigned appropriately. This is one of the main areas that delegation is very important.



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### **Experiential learning for MSU nutrition students**

The results of this study show that Fun with Food camp provides undergraduate nutrition students at Mississippi State University with experience that allows them to apply knowledge learned in academic courses as well as develop skills that can only be learned through real life experience. Fun with Food camp is a valuable learning experience for the children who participate as campers. Through this study, it can be concluded that Fun with Food camp is also a valuable asset for the education of the counselors. It serves as an experience that supplements the nutrition curriculum at Mississippi State University. In real life, everything does not go as planned. If a student were to plan a weeklong kid's cooking camp in their Community Nutrition class, all supplies would be accounted for and the schedule would pack in as much learning as possible. You do not have to figure out last minute solutions to unforeseen problems.

It is important to note that the Fun with Food camp experience fits into the experiential learning theory model. A volunteer or job that does not provide time for reflection and processing does not allow students to gain the full benefits of hands-on learning. One of the most beneficial aspects of Fun with Food camp, in this respect, is the time for reflection and planning at the end of each day. This allowed the counselors to

generate new knowledge and ideas and turn them into actions that could be implemented and evaluated the next day at camp.

Since experiential learning has been shown to be beneficial to the learning process, it is important that students have options available for them for practical, hands on learning. Fun with Food camp, along with other programs like it, allow students to get the experience they need while providing a fun and crucial service to the community.

### **Goals and objectives for future counselors**

Based on the results, I created five goals or learning objectives that can be set for future counselors. These goals reflect the importance of Fun with Food camp as an experiential learning opportunity to hone old skills and develop new skills.

1. To put into practice information learned in nutrition courses such as Science of Food Preparation, Community Nutrition, and Lifecycle Nutrition, and strengthen “hard” skills such as cooking and nutrition education.
2. To gain discernment about future interests and careers in nutrition.
3. To strengthen critical thinking skills by using concrete experience to inform and test new ideas and knowledge (via the Experiential Learning Theory model).
4. To develop problem-solving skills by learning how to handle stressful situations, identify and respond effectively, and confidently make decisions in a situation.
5. To develop time management skills by learning how to properly delegate tasks, think ahead and prepare, and increase organizational skills.

## **Implications**

This research study has implications for those looking to recreate a similar food camp experience for children. Even if the counselors working with the children are not undergraduate nutrition students, this study highlights some of the knowledge necessary to be an effective counselor. The students in this study utilized knowledge including food preparation, nutrition education, and child nutrition. While a counselor for a similar camp would not necessarily have to be a nutrition student, they would need to be proficient in skills in these areas. The study also outlines the roles and responsibilities of the counselor position. With a clear idea of what is required of a counselor, counselors can be recruited based on their ability and willingness to perform those tasks.

The study will also help with the recruitment of future counselors by giving them evidence of the benefits they will receive from the experience. The goal and learning objectives derived for this study can be given to undergraduate nutrition students at Mississippi State University during the training session. With clear goals and evidence of the skills learned, the experience becomes attractive not just to gain service hours or as something for a resume. For students preparing to apply to dietetic internships, graduate programs, or enter the workforce after graduation, gaining the “soft” skills found in this study is especially important. Problem solving and time management are highly important to be successful after graduation [15].

Because this research shows that students gained benefits from this experience, it can be used by nutrition educators and those working to develop the curriculum for DPDs. This study shows that students are gaining skills similar to those seen in the literature concerning experiential learning for students in other disciplines. Nutrition

should be positioned among disciplines such as nursing and teaching that have established experiential learning built into their undergraduate curriculum.

### **Future research**

Future research of this type will be able to evaluate experiential learning situations against what was found in this study. There were limitations to this study, including a small sample size and short time frame in which data was collected. Future research could look at multiple years of camp to acquire additional data over time. This study shows that more research needs to be conducted concerning undergraduate nutrition students and experiential learning. Other DPD programs that incorporate experiential learning into their curriculum should be conducting research about the efficacy and benefits of their programs. Hopefully undergraduate nutrition will begin to move towards a more practical learning approach to compliment classroom knowledge.

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## APPENDIX A

### FIELD NOTES FROM FUN WITH FOOD CAMP 2016

## **Day 1-June 20th**

### 6:45am-team meeting

- “cement relationship with child” – Camp director on the most important goal for Day 1
- Camp director discussing schedule and tasks for the day; asking directed questions, not a lot of response from counselors. Counselors seem hesitant to answer and say the ‘wrong thing’
- There are recipe sheets on the fridges in each kitchen for the counselors to use, the recipe for lunch is sandwiches, veggies and hummus,
  - The only recipe the counselors practiced at training Friday was the quiches
- Most important things for the counselors to remember, according to Camp director – “keep kids busy” and “have high energy”....doesn’t feel like high energy in the room, but it’s also early and the kids have not arrived yet

### 8:30am-lesson with Camp director

- Counselors standing in back of rows of chairs or sitting down at the tables listening
- Of all the counselors, Counselor B and Counselor C are looking through their notebooks and recipes, the rest of the counselors are just listening. One of the main things that was discussed at training was the importance of being prepared for the day....the counselors looking through their notebooks seem to be prepping for when the kids come back to the kitchens to cook, but no other counselors are doing any sort of prep work
- Counselor D is on picture duty
- When Camp director asked for a knife set, Counselor A and Counselor E are the only two counselors who responded and moved to help, they were also the only two who responded to help prep for the cookie demo
- The other counselors seem to hesitate and wait for someone else to volunteer first, or seem to be waiting to be addressed directly and asked to do something specifically. Not a lot of initiative to offer help before it is directly asked of them

### 9:05am-Asian cuisine lesson with Counselor H

- Very engaging, seemed well prepared, got good responses from the kids.

### 9:25-Snack time

- Lots of milling around of counselors, when Camp director asks for something it takes a while for someone to get up and do it or decide who is doing what. There seems to be a lot of confusion over what specific tasks are involved in preparing, serving, and cleaning up the snack. The counselors look to each other to see what each other is doing before acting, instead of taking initiative and doing things on their own. I get the sense that they are worried about doing something ‘wrong’ and so do nothing instead



- The high school student is the only counselor picking up trash, until Camp director said something and then Counselor A and Counselor E picked up trays to help get trash, and then Counselor G and Counselor F joined them. Had to be prompted to help instead of noticing what needed to be done and doing it. Again, lots of looking to each other to see who is doing what.
- Counselor C is making notes about her students, going down her list and trying to identify them sitting in the group while they listen to Camp director speak, all the other counselors are just listening and standing/sitting, not using this time to prep

#### 10am-Chef demonstration

- Demonstration on knife skills and making stir fry
- While chef is talking, Counselor E and Counselor A are prepping to make cookies
- Counselor C is cleaning up after snack, Counselor G and Counselor B are sitting at their table going over the recipes, Counselor A is watching the demonstration, Counselor H is standing by Chef and making sure he has what he needs, Counselor D is still on picture duty. There is a little bit more of counselors doing specific tasks to help out and prep?
- Camp Director is giving instructions and calling on individual counselors to help and do things. What I notice is a lack of initiative to step up and do things without being asked. They respond quickly if Camp director calls them by name to do something.
- Counselor H encouraging the campers to keep listening, the only counselor who is doing any sort of crowd control...more counselors could be used dispersed among the students to help them focus
- Counselor C is taking pictures now
- Counselor D and Camp director are helping one of the campers make stir fry at the oven in the kitchen next to the demonstration
- Counselor G is working as sous chef and getting the chef ingredients and prepping things

#### 10:40-serving stir fry

- Counselor A is serving, no one else is helping serve unless directly asked

#### 11am-prepping for lunch

- Maybe this is organized chaos, not sure how organized it is though, the counselors seem a little bit frazzled and trying to figure out a plan while also dealing with their campers is proving to be difficult. I see lots of counselors hovering nervously over campers using knives
- Group 1 is the youngest group, with Counselor B and Counselor G, and they are cutting up the vegetables for lunch, chef is helping them work on their knife skills (using the small white paring knives)
- Group 2 is all 9 year old girls, with Counselor C and Counselor H, they're making hummus for the veggies, and Camp director has taken over giving instructions for the group. The group is chaotic and the counselors don't really know what to do since Camp director and chef are doing most of the work. Counselor H and

Counselor C seem a little bit lost and don't know how to take the lead since Camp director has stepped in to take the lead. Eventually they organize the campers into lines and let them each have a turn pulsing the food processor. It seems to work for their group to let all of the girls have a turn doing the same thing...they don't want to divide tasks and risk missing out on something. I think this is a good example of them understanding the personality of their campers and adapting to it (9 year old girls can be hard to figure out!!)

- Group 3 is a mixture of girls and boys, Counselor F and Counselor E and Counselor A are doing a lot of demonstrating and the campers are standing around watching. The campers are getting to mix things but not measure or do much. The counselors seem nervous that if they let the campers do too much that it will mess up the recipe or that they won't get it done on time
- Group 4 is older girls, and are the most organized group. High school counselor is taking the lead and Counselor I is standing back to let her give most of the instructions. They are in charge of making oatmeal chocolate chip cookies. After a while Counselor I is stepping up and giving more instructions to the campers, but since High school counselor has been a counselor before, Counselor I is letting her do most of the talking

FIELD TRIP: sensory lab

3:45-Dishwashing lesson by Counselor G

3:50-Place setting lesson by Counselor B

3:55-Food safety and sanitation lesson by High school counselor

4pm-Miss Julie

5:21-Team Meeting

- Camp director's question is "what did you learn?"
- Camp director observed that we didn't get through as much as we needed to for the day, and had to leave some things off that were scheduled for today.
- "How can you do it better tomorrow?"
- Counselor responses to this question were:
  - Do a better job delegating tasks to campers and junior counselors, not trying to do everything on their own
  - Knowing how to better fill in gaps when there is down time instead of just standing around listening or waiting for someone to give instructions. Be better at taking initiative and recognize what needs to be done.
  - Group 2 (Counselor H and Counselor C) recognized that their group all really wanted to do the exact same thing, and so they want to find ways to split tasks between the girls where they all feel involved and like they're doing equally fun parts of the cooking.

- Need to have more patience with the campers and let them do things on their own time and not get frustrated at their skill level
- All groups agreed that working with the junior counselors was frustrating and that it was hard to get them to do anything without being directly asked several times. Be patient with them as well but also work to make sure they aren't just acting like campers and are helping out
- Camp director encourages the counselors that "the first day is always the most hectic"
- Counselors need to learn to be firm and be in charge, or the campers will run over them
- Group 1 (Counselor B and Counselor H and Counselor G) mentioned that they need to find ways to keep their campers busy. Since they're the youngest and have the easier tasks, they finished early and had a hard time finding tasks for the campers
- Group 3 (Counselor E, Counselor F, Counselor A) said their group needed more organization
- The rest of the evening was spent prepping for tomorrow, most of the counselors stayed and did the bare minimum, leaving as soon as possible

Reflections from Monday: as an outsider looking in, everything seemed to get done with the kids enjoying things. Not everything that was on the schedule got done though. I would say that there was a lot of lag time in between activities, partly because it takes time to move kids and partly because the counselors weren't completely in a rhythm yet. Not many counselors did anything without being asked or reminded first. The chain of command went from Camp director to Counselor D to the counselors, or Camp director directly to the counselors. While the kids were occupied with other things, like demonstrations, not many counselors did anything to prep, or didn't seem to want to volunteer when Camp director needed something. They responded best when directly addressed and asked to do something. I saw a lot of counselors trying to do the work cooking for the kids. It was hard for them to relinquish control and let the kids do things by themselves, even if it meant they might do it wrong. This was particularly evident when the kids were handling knives or other sharp objects.

The cameras didn't last all day and the battery of the front camera died. Not sure how much of the front presentations got recorded. Tim switched them to a lower quality setting that should run longer, and I need to remember to turn them off when we leave for field trips and stuff, the front camera doesn't need the wireless mic to pick up sound. I felt awkward at first, and wasn't sure whether I was supposed to be more observing or helping out. Camp director told me at the end of the day to focus on observing rather than assisting groups. I think this will help me understand my role as observer better for Tuesday. I don't think the counselors act differently because they know I'm observing them. I think it helps that I know them and am sort of their peer.

## **Day 2-June 21<sup>st</sup>**

### 7:15am-Morning Meeting

- The counselors are here early to mise en place and prep and plan before the campers get here.
- Camp director is discussing strategies for the day related to what was discussed the night before at the meeting after camp, no one is really talking and none of the counselors have any questions. The room is very quiet while the counselors are prepping.

### 7:45-Kids arrive

- The kids are coming in and sitting at the tables listing as many fruits as they can. Some groups have on counselor at the table and one in the kitchen prepping, some groups have both working with the kids at the tables

### 8:45-Camp director talking to campers at front

- The campers are tasting raw and toasted almond slices, which need to be passed out
- None of the counselors have stepped up to offer to help pass out the almonds, and Camp director is clearly frustrated that no one is helping pass out the first batch. The junior counselors end up passing out the almonds.
- The counselors go the hint and helped to pass out the second round of almonds and also helped take up trash from the campers after they were done.

### 9am-French cuisine presentation by Counselor A

### 9:20-Measurement lesson by Counselor E

### 9:45-Chef arrives

- Campers got a sample of roasted sweet potatoes, and this time all of the counselors got up to help serve the samples, some of them putting the samples on plates and Counselor C and Counselor G actually passing around the trays. This went much more efficiently than last time. Counselor G and Counselor C also passed around trays for seconds.
- Counselor F, Counselor I, and Counselor E all took around trays to pick up trash after the campers were done eating
- There is some prep going on for lunch while Chef does his demonstration. Counselor I and Counselor G and High school counselor are making squash (prepping and roasting it for soup). However, there is still a lot of standing around of counselors who are not prepping in their kitchens.
- The kids are pretty loud today sitting in the front of the class, and none of the counselors are doing anything to try and maintain order. Camp director is the main one giving instructions, and the counselors seem unsure if they are supposed

to be interacting with the campers (I think it would be helpful if a few of them sat with the campers or at least stood close and tried to keep the kids quiet.

- The campers are now tasting samples of spaghetti squash. Similar system to the previous samples: some counselors putting squash on plates, some passing out, some taking up trash.

#### 10:35-begin lunch prep

- Goal is to have lunch done by 11:45 to eat at 12
- Group 2 has created a system where every one takes turn doing one task bc all the girls still want to help with everything. Even though this was something they talked about yesterday to find a way to manage this, it seems to be easier said than done.
- Group 1: Counselor B is letting the kids do things themselves and just talking them through it. There is not as much chaos as I expected from the youngest group. The campers are responding well to being instructed and allowed to do things on their own.
- Group 4 (oldest girls) has one girl cooking meat, a few girls chopping onions and other vegetables, and a few helping make the butternut squash soup. This group is definitely the most organized, High school counselor is making the soup and Counselor I is going back and forth between the other stove and the prep tables making sure everything is going smoothly. They have been able to delegate well, and I think it helps that they have the oldest girls, so they don't need as much direct supervision.
- Group 3 still seems the most chaotic, but the counselors chose a few girls to move to a different table and solely grate cheese. This has freed up some space and is allowing the counselors to focus more on individuals in their group. 2 boys are sautéing with Counselor A and some are chopping celery with Counselor E.
- The chaos of the room seems somewhat organized. There have been no major catastrophes which is a success in my book
- The counselors for the most part are really letting the kids do things and stepping back; a lot less micromanaging
- Lunch didn't end up being served until 12:45, which was when we were supposed to leave for the field trip.
- Group 1 finished first, maybe because they have the least number of campers and they were only making quiche, and all the other groups had other foods to make as well.
- The oldest group (4) was definitely the most organized; High school counselor and Counselor I had everyone doing individual tasks and Counselor I was going back and forth between the girls chopping and grating cheese and the girls and the oven making sausage and onions.
- Camp director ended up helping group 2 again, with sautéing their mushrooms. Counselor H and Counselor C had them very organized when they were chopping apples for their tarts. The girls especially listen to Counselor H, who is very quick to encourage the kids and give instructions. Counselor C is less vocal.

- Group 3 was the least organized and the last to finish their quiches and salad. The campers didn't end up cleaning up and the counselors had to do most of the dishes and clean up.

#### Field trip to the tomato farm

#### 5:15-Team meeting

- First question Camp director asked was "what went well?"
  - The counselors all agreed that the field trip went well, was organized, and enjoyable for the campers
- Camp director was the first to say "the meal was a fail"
- However, everyone agrees that the quiche tasted good even though it was finished an hour late.
- Next question: "What can we improve on?"
  - Time management was the main thing that everyone agreed needed to be improved on.
  - The things that the counselors said slowed down the lunch making process revolve around the campers: the kids have short attentions spans and get distracted before they can finish a task; they are eager to help and to do tasks, but don't wait for instructions and so do things wrong that have to be done over; the difference in the ability to critically think, especially between the different age groups, and the counselors not factoring this into how they give instructions or how they expect the campers to act
- The question was raised of whether there should be a cap on the amount of money kids can bring to buy vegetables at the tomato farm (some had \$25, some had \$5)
  - Camp director vetoed this, said real life isn't fair so kids need to get used to these things
- The mood of the group is lighter than last night. There are more responses and group participation in the discussion. More counselors are taking notes tonight as we debrief.
- Planning for tomorrow, Counselor A is going to move to group 2 since she has experience from last year, and Counselor H will most likely be out with her mom in the hospital.

The plan is to make all 4 pizzas at the same time so that they will be out in time, since a lot of groups put their quiches in at different times today.

### **Day 3-June 22<sup>nd</sup>**

#### 9am-Italian cuisine presentation by Counselor I

#### 9:06-Ms. Julie is here talking about cheese and cultures

- The campers got samples of cheese, and it went smoothly, the best so far. The counselors are getting better at facilitating snacks and picking up trash without being prompted by Camp director.
- Most of the counselors are helping with the cheese samples (cutting and serving), Counselor E is prepping pears for snacks by himself in the back of the room, Counselor A is on picture duty, Counselor H sees Counselor E cutting pears and goes back to help him.
- The kids are little bit loud, but the counselors are still not doing anything to control their groups, Ms. Julie is the one trying to control the noise level of the kids
- High school counselor and The extension agent B. are the main people helping pick up trash from cheese samples
- The transition between speaker at the front are rough, and the campers use this as time to get really rowdy. Chef is late so Camp director is buying time with Ms. Julie making cheese. The counselors really don't have any interaction with the campers during this time, and aren't doing anything to distract the counselors, leaving that to Camp director.
- Counselor I and High school counselor have moved to their kitchen and are prepping for lunch

#### 10:10-Chef here

- Something I've noticed is that the more interaction a counselor has with Camp director, the more she singles them out and asks them to do things, and the more they seem attentive and ready to help. It's a chicken/egg thing, I'm not sure if she chooses them more because they volunteered themselves more to begin with, or if they volunteer more because she started singling them out and asking them to do things first. It has developed that there are a few counselors who seem to do more because they both volunteer more and she calls on them specifically to do things more.

#### 10:30-Lunch prep

- The gas ovens and stoves are not working, which leaves 3 out of the 8 stoves functional to make pizzas for lunch and prep toppings on the stovetop. Camp director pulled the counselors out to have a meeting while the campers are still watching chef do his demonstration. They made a plan to rotate the pizzas through the 3 ovens that are working and to not mention anything to the campers.
- Lunch prep started at 11 and is scheduled to be done by 12:30
- Things seem to be going smoothly even with just 3 ovens

- The counselors seem a little bit more panicked, but are calming down as things actually start to get done and pizzas get in the oven.
- In group 1, the counselors are micromanaging the campers more than yesterday. It seems like under the pressure they want to make sure lunch gets done despite the oven shortage, and that is making them less lenient with the campers and willing to risk them doing something wrong that would cause a delay in lunch.
- Group 2 has a lot of help from Chef again, but the counselors have split up tasks well and the girls are responding well to doing separate tasks.
- Group 3 counselors let the kids have lots of free reign at the beginning, while the pizza dough was being prepped initially. Chef told them that the dough had been overworked after it initially came out of the oven, and then the counselors took charge and did more for the campers
- Group 4 is organized and doing fine, as usual.
- Lunch was ready on time and served buffet style

#### Field trip to dairy farm

- During the field trip, most of the counselors clumped together and didn't do much to control the kids, who were running around trying to pet all the cows instead of listening. Enthusiasm was pretty low with the counselors during this time, and they didn't interact with the campers much, relying on the farmer giving the tour to do everything (with exception of youngest group).

#### Post-field trip activity: making butter, potting plants, and playing games outside

- It is really hot outside, but the campers went outside to plant herb seeds in little pots. The kids enjoyed it, and then got jars to run around and make butter in. We tried to keep the kids in the shade, but none of the counselors wanted to lead the circle for the kids to walk around, and a lot of the kids were complaining about being hot, and the counselors mostly just stood around and watched. Camp director took the lead with this.
- Playing parachute games, a few of the counselors got into it and had a spot on the parachute, but some tried to stay in the shade and just watch. Kids mostly just seemed hot since the parachute was not in the shade.

#### 5:15-Post camp meeting

- Something that was immediately brought up was that today Camp director asked Counselor D to tell the junior counselors to do something (refill hand soap containers in sink) without anyone checking that they knew how to do the task correctly. They ended up breaking some of the soap dispensers. Camp director said that she assumes the same about the counselors- that they know how to do everything she asks them to do, and that its important for them to ask questions if they don't know how to do things. Assume less.
- The gas going out was a good life experience for the counselors to learn how to react when things don't go as planned.



- The counselors did a good job responding and staying calm. None of the kids noticed that the ovens were not working and that things were being cooked differently.
  - Camp director thought the pizza tasted better this year despite the fiasco.
  - “What went well?”
    - Counselor A going between groups 2 and 3 worked well to help spread out the tasks with the two highest energy groups
    - The pizzas went well, the way it was set up allowed for campers to all help out
    - Group 3 was sharing really well, with tasks and utensils and encouraging each other
    - Serving the pizzas buffet style made things a lot smoother for lunch time
    - Group 2 was successful at dividing tasks between the girls today
    - Group 1 had two tables they were able to work on today, and that significantly improved their ability to organize the campers into working on different tasks
      - Also used very good manners today and listened well (The extension agent B. put the fear of God in them and made sure they knew that they are not in charge)
    - Group 4 has more advanced skill sets and is running out of things to do because they get their work done very quickly. Tomorrow they will work on reception food tasks to keep them occupied.
  - Tasks for tomorrow morning include making salsa for the contest (also a snack) and making granola to take home
  - Discussing instructions for pasta and cinnamon chips for tomorrow. Most of the counselors are taking notes on recipes and instructions.
  - High school counselor and The extension agent B. are the most vocal during the meeting and discussions (experience and age?)
  - Tasks are being rearranged and assigned between groups depending on the strengths and weaknesses of each group, including both the campers and the counselors
- Camp director points out that employers want you to be able to think on your feet

and that this is great experience in that department

## Day 4-June 23<sup>rd</sup>

- This morning the campers started off in the kitchen when they came in to make granola and salsa as planned. The kitchens all seemed pretty calm, and the counselors were doing less crowd/damage control and a lot more instruction and watching. The campers seem really excited to come in and immediately start cooking instead of having to wait around and sit at the tables. There are a lot of different tasks for both recipes and so the counselors have been able to divide up the tasks well among the different kids in their groups.

### 9:10- Middle Eastern Cuisine lesson by Counselor E

- Camp director is talking about grains, since the granola is still in the ovens and a few groups didn't finish their salsa
- There are a lot more counselors moving around and finishing things and cleaning and working in their kitchens while Camp director is talking, mostly because the campers didn't have time to clean up. But still a difference from sitting around while the kids are at the front.
- Group 4 finished first, and group 1 finished second. Counselor B and Counselor G are really letting the kids be hands on and do things themselves.
- Counselor H H. isn't here today in Group 2, but Counselor A and Counselor C divided up tasks well. They have a few floaters, and today I noticed that they were able to include them, giving them specific tasks like drying dishes or making yogurt alone with Camp director (this has been a great method of helping counselors handle the especially energetic and enthusiastic kids...let them work on a separate project with Camp director ie. Yogurt, smoothies)
- Group 3 didn't finish their salsa so Counselor E and Counselor F finished after the kids sat down in front. There were a lot of kids standing around watching as they did each step together as a group, and they didn't break up the tasks among the campers. This meant they started their salsa later than the other groups. Each kid got a turn doing each step, though, so they were getting hands on time.
- The counselors in the more hectic groups (2&3) are doing more to prep and help with snacks and tastings, especially Counselor C and Counselor E.
- Counselor A is working on her group's granola. Counselor B and Counselor G are heating up their water for pasta.
- All of the counselors are better using their down time during chef's demonstration time to clean and prep their kitchens for lunch. A definite improvement from the beginning of the week.
- I think the kids are less rowdy today because they started off in the kitchens cooking instead of sitting and writing in their journals. But that's just a speculation.

### 10am-Cinnamon roll demonstration with Chef

- The kids are very interested in this demonstration, and are looking forward to tasting the finished product.

### 10:20-Lunch prep

- Lunch needs to be done by 12, and it will be a big time management since we are cooking pasta. Every group is supposed to drop their noodles in the water at the same time so that it will be hot when served.
- The groups are doing a better job of delegating tasks today
- Group 3 in particular are doing a good job, Counselor E and Counselor F split up tasks and have kids sautéing onions, cutting tomatoes, and making cinnamon chips
- I noticed Counselor I giving advice to one of her campers and coaching her through cutting peppers without getting in and doing it or her.
- Group 1 has a system worked out where all of the kids work in the middle tables with one or two counselors and then they pull one kid at a time to help work and the stove or oven with the other counselor. This seems to work really well with the younger kids and allow the counselors to monitor what they're doing and have one on one time with each of the campers at least once. This is a great example of the counselors adjusting to match the needs and skill level of their campers.
- Group 2 is losing control of its stragglers, maybe because Counselor H H. isn't here today. However, they do have the kids split up in groups doing different tasks without the campers complaining too much.
- Counselor E is problem solving with the girls who are cooking onions at the stove, and making sure they have a system that works for all 3 of them.
- Counselor F and Counselor E both mentioned that today is going smoothly, especially since they had a lot of it prepped before hand for the pasta. This is one of the first times the counselors have voiced to me that they feel things are going as planned.
- Counselor D also mentioned that it feels like things are going smoothly today. I can definitely tell that the counselors have gotten into a rhythm by this point. They are comfortable with their campers and are getting better at organizing and giving orders to the group. Preparation and mise en place has also gotten better each day, which helps the counselors be calmer when starting to cook.
- Lunch was ready by 12:15, and everything as done and cleaned up by the time the bus got there for the field trip, even though the bus was late.

#### 1:30-Field trip to the dairy research farm

- Saw the cow with the fistula and the campers got to stick their hands inside the cow's stomach and pull out grass.
- This field trip was shorter than yesterday's and seemed to go a lot smoother.
- The counselors were more spread out around the kids and involved in making sure they were listening and involved (more so than yesterday). The counselors did a good job encouraging the kids to participate and put their hand inside the cow's stomach. When the kids had to line up to get back on the bus, the counselors were able to get the kids organized into lines without out much trouble or complaining on either side.

#### 3-back in the kitchens

- The rest of the afternoon is being spent prepping food for the reception tomorrow after graduation. This involves lots of chopping fruit and vegetables, which seems to be a great thing to keep the kids occupied. The counselors seem tired but are keeping the kids under control for the most part.

#### Post-camp meeting

- Tomorrow's lunch will be a build your own taco thing
- The goal is to use this meal as an opportunity to talk to kids about spices for the meat and beans and salsa
- The question is posed whether or not the counselors want to make biscuits tomorrow, which is technically on the schedule. Unanimous NO from the counselors
- Tomorrow's field trip is to Kroger, and so Camp director is spending a lot of time talking to the counselors about containing the kids while in the grocery store. Reminders: be able to see all kids at one time, stay near them at all times, etc.

### **Day 5- June 24<sup>th</sup>**

- Last day of camp
- Energy seems higher this morning in comparison to other mornings. The counselors are sitting around and planning for the day and writing speeches for each of their campers for graduation. Definitely the most talking there's been in the morning so far.
- Camp director is talking about meats and protein today, so she is prepping and writing things on the board
- Counselor F and Counselor E and Counselor A are prepping the yogurt parfaits we're going to eat for dessert after lunch
- Group 1 is having kids cut onions for lunch as they come in, so they have all of their onions prepped for lunch

#### 8:50-Lesson on Mexican cuisine by Counselor C

#### 9:10-Chef's demonstration

- Today chef is demonstrating how to make beef stew
- Crowd control is the best yet today. There are a few counselors sitting down with the campers today and it seems to help them focus better.
- Snack time also went really smoothly. All of the counselors were on board to help prepare, pass out, and collect trash. The kids are listening well to everything.
- Lunch is scheduled to be done at 11:30 today

#### 11:15

- Lunch was done 15 minutes early today. A lot of the prep work of chopped onions and tomatoes and grated cheese and things had already been prepped. The only

- parts that really required much preparation were the ground beef and heating up the tortillas.
- Each kitchen has gotten into its own unique groove and gets things done on time. Kitchens 2 and 3 especially have been able to get their meals done on time. Those 2 kitchens seemed hectic and loud today but they still managed to do what they needed in order to get lunch done.

#### 12:30-Kroger field trip

- Some of the counselors stayed behind to help Counselor D prep for the graduation ceremony and reception. Enough counselors went to Kroger to have two per group (I went with group 4 so High school counselor could stay back and help)
- The field trip went exceptionally well. None of the campers got lost or broke anything or even touched anything. The counselors did a good job of watching their group really closely and keeping them quiet and contained. If they had done the same thing with the other field trips I think they would have been a lot more successful (especially the dairy farm).

#### Final celebration

- The kids are super excited and everyone seems to be having fun getting ready for the parents to come to the reception later
- Counselors are a little bit frazzled but everything is getting done for the most part

#### Friday Reflections

By today, the counselors are worlds more confident than they were on Monday. I think the switch happened around Wednesday, which makes sense. I can see real improvements in how each counselor manages their group, especially with respects to how much they let the kids do. I can tell while the kids were prepping for the reception that the counselors were letting them use the knives without hovering over them nervously or trying to cut things for them. The counselors are also taking so much more initiative than they did at the beginning of the week. Today I could tell they had a sense of confidence in what they were doing instead of waiting around for someone to tell them what to do or simply reacting to whatever is happening.

APPENDIX B

POST FUN WITH FOOD CAMP COUNSELOR SURVEY

### **Question One**

Reflecting on Food Camp, what stands out as the most memorable experience?

Getting hands on experience of teaching the children skills that I have learned previously.

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I really enjoyed the field trips that we went on. I personally have never been to a Dairy Farm and it was neat to get the opportunity to milk a cow.

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Having a hands-on experience with working in the kids in the kitchen. I personally believe that it was the best way for them to learn specific skills, like the knife cutting techniques.

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The most memorable experience for me was any time the children used knives. They used knives almost every day the entire week to do some kind of chopping or cutting and practice their knife skills. This experience was stressful and terrifying for me and that is the reason it is so memorable.

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The field trips were the most memorable experience to me. I feel that the field trips we took, such as the dairy farm and the fistulated steer, give the campers a learning opportunity that they might not have otherwise. I feel like we are able to have a large impact on their education of farm to table with these experiences.

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My most memorable experience was probably the part of the day when it was time to make lunch. Letting the campers have basically supervised free reign over the kitchen was something I had to get used to for sure, but getting to see their reaction when their recipe turned out good in the end was rewarding. That feeling is something I will definitely remember.

### **Question Two**

What do you feel you learned about yourself during your time as a counselor?

I learned I enjoy being around kids. I have been a leader at VBS at church, but other than that I have never been a camp counselor to children before. I also became more confident in the kitchen and was able to put into practice what I had learned in science of food prep.

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That I could delegate tasks to other members of my group in a nice and effective manner without coming on too strong.

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I feel like I learned more patience with children. I feel like I learned how to cope and handle stressful situations. I feel like I was able to relate to all the different personalities that were represented from the different children. I learned how to think quickly on my feet.

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I learned that I need to be prepared for anything and learn how to problem solve on a moments notice. No matter how much planning you might do the night before, circumstances may arise where you have to throw out your previous plans and utilize your problem solving skills. I learned that no matter how urgent situations may seem, I need to be able to step back and take time to think objectively while staying collected.

I learned that I need to be a little bit more patient. I felt myself get frustrated with campers at times if they weren't doing something correctly in the kitchen, and I would feel bad for that afterward. I think I need to be more understanding especially when teaching someone who has never experienced that certain thing before.

### **Question Three**

What expectations did you have coming into the week of camp that were met?

All of my expectations were met and more so. I expected the camp to teach kids basic cooking skills and allow them to become more comfortable cooking at home, and I believe this camp allowed that to happen.

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I knew that camp would be long and stressful, but my expectations that I believe were met were to make sure the kids had a good time and learned as much as they could.

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My expectations coming into camp about learning about childhood behavior and how to teach children were definitely met.

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I expected to be able to practice and utilize many different skills that I would use in my professional career. These skills include organizational skills, multi-tasking skills, problem-solving skills, speaking skills, and teaching skills. Camp allowed me to utilize all of these skills. I also expected to be able to see nutrition-related themes that I have learned while in class. It was very beneficial to be able to see my learning experiences from the classroom play out in a real-world situation.

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I expected it to be loud and crazy at times. Those were definitely met. I also expected to be able to see the campers learn a lot and improve a lot of kitchen skills. This happened as well. I also wanted to befriend all the campers equally in my group, and that happened.

### **Question Four**

What expectations did you have about working as a counselor that were not met?

There were no expectations I had that were not met.

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I guess my expectation was that the junior counselor would have been more involved and would have been ready to work. Maybe our counselor was too young for the position she was in, but I was disappointed in her overall work ethic.

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I didn't have any expectations that weren't met.

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I feel like all my expectations were met during camp.

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The majority of my expectations were met during this week. I can't really think of any that weren't met.



### Question Five

How did your camp experience reinforce knowledge learned in your nutrition classes?  
I used what I had learned in Science of food prep the entire week. During camp I realized just how valuable taking that class was to me. Everything that we were teaching the kids, I had learned it before in that class. I learned Sanitation, kitchen safety, proper hand washing, table setting, knives skills, equipment identification, what foods are in season, mise en place, sensory mapping, and more in my nutrition classes and that was what was taught this week.

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Fun with Food was basically an overview and less detailed summary of Science of Food Prep. It made me recall lessons such as food safety, knife skills, and following recipes that we had previously learned about as college students and teach them to much younger children.

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The knowledge I learned in quantity and food prep and also in nutrition through lifecycle were definitely reinforced. I have to read and understand recipes and weigh and measure and also help teach table setting, hand washing, dishwashing and food preparation skills. I also had to teach children nutrition knowledge to children about the food groups and different culinary cuisines.

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I was able to see nutrition topics that I had learned in the classroom play out in a real world experience. Especially from a community nutritionist perspective. The group of campers was very diverse—all coming from very different situations. I was able to link patterns of dietary and behavioral habits to the different situations of each camper's family. I taught me to be empathetic with each camper's background.

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When I would try to talk a camper in to trying a food they thought that they did not like, I was able to tell them the nutritional positives about the food in order to help persuade them. Like what vitamin the food contains or what disease it helps prevent. Being around kids from the community reinforced a lot of things I learned this past year in community nutrition also.

### Question Six

How might you use what you learned this week in a professional setting in the future?  
In my future career as a dietitian I will be able to remember and refer back to this experience. Getting to use what i have learned in school to teach children basic cooking skills and seeing how they grew in just a few short days was such a blessing. If I get the opportunity to do another camp or be involved in something that teaches kids basic cooking and kitchen skills I will be able to refer back to fun with food camp.

I would use the time management and organizational skills in any future professional setting as they are one that employers look for.

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I will use the skills I learned with stress and time management and coping skills all areas of my life including professional. I could use what I have learned about childhood behavior in a number of future employment opportunities.

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I believe that with the skills I learned during camp, I could replicate this camp in any professional location I choose. These skills provide me the ability to impact the community around me in a positive way. That is all I want. To be able to provide the tools necessary for anyone, especially children, to learn how to adopt and live a balanced, nutritious lifestyle.

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If I were to be in a professional setting working with children in the future, I feel like I will be better prepared. I will go into it knowing that I need to always be patient and expect kids to possibly need to do something a few times before getting it right, and that is okay. I also know now that in a professional setting I will probably always have to be thinking one step ahead, just like I had to do at Food Camp. There always needs to be plan A and plan B already figured out.

### **Question Seven**

How might your experiences affect your career goals related to nutrition and dietetics? This experience opened my eyes a little bit more to community nutrition. I have always been very geared towards clinical nutrition, but this allowed me to become more interested in community nutrition.

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I feel like Fun with Food Camp made me realize that my personality is not best suited for working with children.

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coming into this experience I thought I would never want to work with children in the field of nutrition and dietetics but now I know that I can and I am more open to the possibility.

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My experiences from camp have led me to re-evaluate my focus in nutrition. I feel like with the skills I have learned from camp, I have a wide variety of options available to me in dietetics. I know that my experiences from camp will help me narrow my focus and allow me to find a position in dietetics that I love.

### **Question Eight**

If you have any additional information you would like to provide about your experience as a Fun with Food Camp counselor, please include it here.

I enjoyed fun with food camp and I do believe it is a good opportunity as a nutrition student. This gives you a chance to utilize what I have learned in several of my nutrition classes and there's no better way to improve on a skill than to teach it to someone else. I may not would volunteer for it again, but i would definately suggest to any nutrition student at state to volunteer for this opportunity at-least once.